

In the area of athletics, a major renovation project of the decade was the expansion of the football stadium. South Bend winters had been hard on the concrete flooring and as the alumni increased, stadium seating did not, and by the early 1990s more money was being returned to alumni for unfulfilled ticket requests than was retained by the university from alumni ticket sales. The board of trustees in the spring of 1994 agreed to expand the stadium on two conditions: 1) that no money be diverted from any other university priority and 2) that all financial benefits from the expansion be applied to the educational mission of the university. The decision was made to expand the old stadium rather than build a new one. As Executive Vice President Father Beauchamp remarked, "I don't want to be remembered in history as the man who tore down 'the house that Rockne built.'" Rockne's stadium remained intact. The expansion was a circular addition around the old stadium, adding approximately 20,000 seats, a new press box, and more restrooms and concession stands. The renovation began in November 1995 and was completed for the first game in the fall of 1997, at a cost of approximately \$50 million, financed chiefly through new bonds. Unfortunately, a major problem surfaced during the opening game against Georgia Tech on September 2. A valve on one of the two major water mains into the stadium had apparently been closed over the preceding winter and had not been reopened. The water pressure dropped and when toilets flushed the pressure was not sufficient to shut off, so the toilets overflowed—at a rate of about 1,200 gallons a minute—flooding the concourse with two inches of water. It took time for the plumber to locate the source of the problem but the culprit valve was eventually reopened and toilets returned to normal.⁸⁹